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26 MAY 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Director, Operations

SUBJECT: OCI Comments on Analysis of Foreign Radio Propaganda

1. OCI has a keen interest in the analysis of Soviet orbit propaganda, and regards Communist press and radio as essential sources, both for factual information and for the expression of official attitudes on various problems. However, OCI questions the validity of interpretations of actual events and policies which are based exclusively upon analyses of radio propaganda. OCI believes that, to have meaning, propaganda must be analyzed in conjunction with, and as part of, the analysis of all other information bearing on the given problem.

2. OCI has particularly valued [redacted] studies which have included summaries of propaganda themes over a period of time, identification of variations and trends in propaganda, and comparisons of propaganda treatment over a period of time or on selected occasions. Frequently, however, these propaganda studies have, because of efforts to arrive at definite conclusions or interpretations, produced results which OCI feels were incomplete or misleading. The analyses have often appeared to have been written around a theme, thus sometimes causing the omission of the type of evidence which OCI desires. The analyses often depend, moreover, upon assumptions or information far beyond the scope of overt propaganda.

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3. OCI's position is that propaganda analysis [redacted] can be profitably pursued only in certain selected problem areas, and then only when the analysis is closely tailored and developed in coordination with the production offices. It is necessary that propaganda analysis projects be done in accordance with exact specifications, drawn up on the basis of (a) type of problem undertaken, (b) all other information bearing on the given problem and (c) relevant hypotheses developed from that information.

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4. Basically, our position is that propaganda analysis is an essential component of the intelligence production process, but should be limited exclusively to producing conclusions regarding the nature and direction of propaganda output. On the other hand, we strongly

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believe that such analysis is dangerous when it attempts to arrive at conclusions on subjects beyond the propaganda field itself. For example, we think it most hazardous to attempt, on the basis of analysis of Soviet propaganda output alone, to reach conclusions regarding actual Soviet intentions or policies and actual events in the Soviet orbit.

4. Attached hereto, as Tab A, are specific examples intended to illustrate cases where we believe propaganda analysis has been extended beyond its proper scope.

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HUNTINGTON D. SNELDEN  
Assistant Director  
Current Intelligence

1 Attachment

Originator:

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Orig & 1 - Addressee  
2 - AD/CI ✓  
2 - Gen Division  
1 - Far East Div  
2 - CS/Sov

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